

Schermack perfin shows up in collector's junk box

Linn's Stamp News reports find on 1906 2¢ shield

The lead article in the June 25 issue of *Linn's* caught the attention of a number of members.

The paper reported that the first and only known example of a United States 1906 2¢ shield vending-machine coil stamp had been found with perforated control marks. It reportedly is also the first stamp from the 1903-1908 definitive series to be found with a perforated control mark.

Up to now, according to writer Rob Haeseler, only stamps from the Washington-Franklin series of 1908 to 1922 have been known with the coded initials used to identify companies that affixed the stamps to their mail.

A New Hampshire collector discovered the stamp along with some 60 other Schermacks in a junk box of coils that had been in his possession for 20 to 25 years.

The APS has authenticated the stamp and guesstimated its value at around \$1,000.

Perfins Club member Atholl Glass, who has written extensively on the subject of Schermack control perfins, identified the user as Hill Publishing Company in New York City—an identification confirmed

by the U.S. perfins catalog.

Schermack perfins are identified by missing pins rather than present pins. The basic device had a pattern of

false starts through the years but when it came down to seeing the actual stamp I've misplaced it somewhere' was the answer given. I have corre-

sponded with the owner and he sent me an enlarged color photocopy. I cannot, of course, be sure if it is Scott 320 or 320a, but it certainly seems genuine from what I can see—even to a notch out at the upper right corner of the stamp (which is caused by a stop-finger in the affixer). The stamp does not have a date cancel but there must have been

two other Schermack control perfins found in the original accumulation.

Here are Glass' comments on those.

"One he could not identify because it was a 1-3-4 Smith, Gray which is a broken pin variety of the company's perfin 3. The other stamp was an unidentified pattern 2-3-5-6. This could also be a broken pin variation (the nearest match would be Quaker Oats 2-3-6) but without a cover it is almost impossible to identify the user."

Schermack perfins are, for the most part, extremely scarce. They were most widely used on "junk mail" and since they were usually not well centered and had holes poked in the middle, they quickly got trashed. Few of them wound up in the hands of collectors—and even fewer survive today.

However, they do still show up in odd mixtures and accumulations and as the *Linn's* article shows, there are still treasures to be found and new discoveries to be made.

Peter Bonsen (#3166) was the first to point out a goof in the perfins glossary in the July/August issue—one that we should have caught because it was so obvious. Here's what Bonsen says.

"The Schermack Company developed three types of perforators, useful in dispensing and affixing machines. It is only in certain Mailometer affixing machines, between 1909 and 1927, that Type III perforations, the well-known "slot" perforations, were used in combination with a device to punch control marks.

"The picture in the glossary is wrong because control marks were never used on regular perforated stamps, only on coil stamps with Schermack Type III perforations."



nine pins arranged in a three-by-three block. Various pins were removed to identify the various companies that used the perfins. The removal of pin 5 was the clue to the identity of the user.

When the article came to the attention of the *Bulletin* editor, we turned to Glass for additional comments. Here is what he had to say.

"This is the first actual sighting of the 1902 series with control perfins that I know of. I have had several

Scott 314 and 320 Schermack coils still in use when the control perfin device was introduced about mid-1909."

In later correspondence Glass viewed